

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An actuator mechanism comprising:
 - an actuator body comprising an actuation chamber having a membrane seat surface;
 - a membrane comprising a thin film shape memory alloy that has a martensite-austenite transition temperature, said membrane being located over said membrane seat surface to define a pump chamber between said membrane seat surface and said membrane, said membrane being movable from an undistorted form to a distorted form;
 - at least one inlet through which fluid is introduced into said pump chamber;
 - at least one outlet through which fluid is removed from said pump chamber, said outlet being located at a spaced location from said inlet;
 - a bias pressure applicator ~~that introduces~~ adapted to pump a pressurized stream of said fluid into said pump chamber at a pressure sufficient to move the membrane from the undistorted form to the distorted form, the fluid being at a temperature that is below said martensite-austenite transition temperature; and
 - a heating system that heats said membrane to an actuation temperature that is above said martensite-austenite transition temperature when said membrane is in said distorted form.
2. (Previously Presented) An actuator mechanism according to claim 1 comprising at least two outlets through which fluid is removed from said pump chamber.
3. (Currently Amended) An actuator mechanism according to claim 1 wherein said membrane seat surface defines a center and a perimeter, and the inlet is located in the center, centrally in said membrane seat surface and said outlet is located between the center and the perimeter towards a perimeter region of said membrane seat surface.
4. (Currently Amended) An actuator mechanism according to claim 2 wherein said membrane seat surface defines a center and a perimeter, and the inlet is located in the center, centrally in said membrane seat surface and said outlets are located between the center and the

~~perimeter towards a perimeter region~~ of said membrane seat surface.

5. (Currently Amended) An actuator mechanism according to claim 4 wherein the perimeter of said membrane seat surface ~~has a~~ is circular ~~perimeter~~.

6. (Original) An actuator mechanism according to claim 1 wherein said membrane seat surface is in the form of a dome that extends inwardly into said actuation chamber.

7. (Previously Presented) An actuator mechanism according to claim 6 wherein said dome has a center, and said inlet is located in the center of said dome.

8. (Currently Amended) An actuator mechanism according to claim 7 wherein said dome has a perimeter, and said outlet is located ~~towards~~ between the center of said dome and the perimeter of said dome.

9. (Currently Amended) An actuator mechanism according to claim 6 wherein said dome has a perimeter, and at least two outlets are located in said membrane seat surface and ~~located towards~~ disposed around the perimeter of said dome.

10. (Original) An actuator mechanism according to claim 9 wherein said outlets are spaced equidistantly around the perimeter of said dome.

11. (Original) An actuator mechanism according to claim 1 wherein said heating system includes a system for applying an electrical current to said membrane to provide heating thereof.

12. (Currently Amended) An actuator mechanism according to claim [[30]] 1 wherein said inlet flow control mechanism comprises an inlet pressure check valve that prevents flow of fluid from said pump chamber out through said inlet when said fluid in said pump chamber is under a pumping force exerted by said membrane.

13. (Previously Presented) An actuator mechanism according to claim 31 wherein said outlet flow control mechanism comprises an outlet pressure check valve that prevents flow of fluid

from said outlet back into said pump chamber wherein said fluid in said pump chamber is under a bias force exerted by said bias pressure applicator.

14. (Currently Amended) A method for pumping fluid comprising the steps of:

A) providing an actuator mechanism comprising:

an actuator body comprising an actuation chamber having a membrane seat surface;

a membrane comprising a thin film shape memory alloy that has a martensite-austenite transition temperature, said membrane being located over said membrane seat surface to define a pump chamber between said membrane seat surface and said membrane, said membrane being movable from an undistorted form to a distorted form;

at least one inlet through which the fluid to be pumped is introduced into said pump chamber;

at least one outlet through which said fluid is removed from said pump chamber, said outlet being located at a spaced location from said inlet;

B) introducing said fluid into said pump chamber at a temperature that is below said martensite-austenite transition temperature and at ~~a bias force~~ a pressure sufficient to move the membrane from the undistorted form to the distorted form, and

C) heating said distorted membrane to an actuation temperature that is above said martensite-austenite transition temperature to exert a pumping force against the fluid in said fluid chamber.

15. (Previously Presented) A method for pumping fluid according to claim 14 wherein at least two outlets are located in said membrane seat surface.

16. (Currently Amended) A method for pumping fluid according to claim 14 wherein said membrane seat surface defines a center and a perimeter, and the inlet is located in the center, centrally in said membrane seat surface and said outlet is located between the center and the perimeter towards a perimeter region of said membrane seat surface.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Original) A method for pumping fluid according to claim 14 wherein said membrane seat surface is in the form of a dome that extends inwardly into said actuation chamber.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) A method for pumping fluid according to claim 19 wherein said dome has a center and a perimeter, and said inlet is located in said center, and at least two outlets are located in said membrane seat surface and located ~~towards~~ between the center and the perimeter of said dome.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Original) A method for pumping fluid according to claim 14 wherein said heating of said distorted membrane is accomplished by passing an electrical current through said membrane.

25. (Currently Amended) In a method for pumping a fluid wherein a membrane comprising a thin film shape memory alloy is repeatedly heated and cooled, the improvement comprising:

forced convective cooling of said membrane by introducing a pressurized flow of said fluid into contact with said membrane at an inlet location at a pressure sufficient to move said membrane from an undistorted form to a distorted form, and

flowing said liquid over said membrane to an outlet location that is spaced from said inlet location.

26. (Original) An improved method for pumping fluid according to claim 25 wherein said fluid is flowed from said inlet location over said membrane to at least two outlet locations.

27. (Original) An improved method for pumping fluid according to claim 26 wherein said

inlet location is located at the center of the membrane and the outlet locations are located around the perimeter of the membrane.

28. (Original) An improved method for pumping fluid according to claim 27 wherein said outlet locations are located equidistantly around the perimeter of said membrane.

29. (Original) An actuator mechanism according to claim 1 wherein said actuator body includes at least two actuation chambers.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Currently Amended) An actuator mechanism according to claim [[30]] 1, wherein said membrane at said actuation temperature exerts a pumping force against the fluid in said fluid chamber that is greater than the bias force applied to said fluid by said bias pressure actuator to thereby move fluid out of said pump chamber through said outlet.

32. (Previously Presented) A method for pumping fluid according to claim 14, wherein said step of introducing said fluid into said pump chamber comprises introducing said fluid into said pump chamber at a bias force that is sufficient to move said membrane from the undistorted form to the distorted form.

33. (Previously Presented) A method for pumping fluid according to claim 32, wherein the pumping force exerted by the membrane is greater than the bias force.